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Your Reference: HL74545/003/ASG/LS
Application No: GB 0310101.1

The Patent Office
Patents Directorate

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24 June 2003

Dear Sirs

Patents Act 1977:
Combined Search and Examination Report under Sections 17 and 18(3)

Latest date for reply: 15 August 2003

I enclose two copies of my search and examination report and a copy of the citation.

By the above date you should either file amendments to meet the objections in the report or make observations on them. If you do not, the application may be refused.

Publication

I estimate that, provided you have met all formal requirements, preparations for publication of your application will be completed soon after 22 July 2003. You will then receive a letter informing you of completion and telling you the publication number and date of publication.

Amendment/withdrawal

If you wish to file amended claims for inclusion with the published application, or to withdraw the application to prevent publication, you must do so before the preparations for publication are completed. No reminder will be issued. If you write to the Office less than 3 weeks before the above completion date, please mark your letter prominently: "URGENT - PUBLICATION IMMINENT".

¹Use of E-mail: Please note that e-mail should be used for correspondence only.

03-JUL-2003 15:24 FROM HASLTINE LAKE

TO 0017132365440

P.05



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Application No: GB 0310101.1

Page 2

24 June 2003

You should also note that the normal, unextended period allowed for complying fully with the requirements of the Act will end on 14 October 2003. However, if you need extra time to settle any remaining objections you are entitled to extend that period by one month by filing Patents Form 52/77 and fee.

Yours faithfully

D.B. Pepper
Examiner



Application No: GB 0310101.1
Claims searched: 1-24

Examiner: D.B.Pepper
Date of search: 23 June 2003

Patents Act 1977 : Search Report under Section 17

Documents considered to be relevant:

Category	Relevant to claims	Identity of document and passage or figure of particular relevance
&		WO 00/77431 A (Shell Internationale Research Maatschappij B.V.)

Categories:

- | | |
|---|---|
| X Document indicating lack of novelty or inventive step | A Document indicating technological background and/or state of the art. |
| Y Document indicating lack of inventive step if combined with one or more other documents of same category. | P Document published on or after the declared priority date but before the filing date of this invention. |
| & Member of the same parent family | E Patent documents published on or after, but with priority date earlier than, the filing date of this application. |

Field of Search:

Search of GB, EP, WO, & US patent documents classified in the following areas of the UKC⁶:

E1F

Worldwide search of patent documents classified in the following areas of the IPC⁷:

E21B

The following online and other databases have been used in the preparation of this search report:

WPI, EPODOC, JAPIO



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Page 1/2

Patents Act 1977

Combined Search and Examination Report under Sections 17 & 18(3)

Basis of the examination

1. My examination has taken account of the amendments filed with your agent's letter of 19 May 2003.

Allowance of the divisional date

2. Your request that this application be treated as having been filed on 6 March 2000, which is the same date of filing as your earlier application number GB 0005399.1, has been allowed.

Clarity and consistency

3. Claim 9 would appear to be redundant having regard to the passage in lines 6 and 7 of claim 1.
4. It is not clear whether the reference in claim 10 to "an interior region of the second tubular member" is the same as that disclosed in claim 1.
5. The reference in claim 16 to "a wellbore" is inconsistent with the reference in claim 1 to "a tunnel".
6. The references in claim 24 to "the support member", "the first fluid passage" and "the pressure relief passage" do not have antecedents.
7. Inconsistencies between claim 1, the title and the description on pages 1-8,11-13 and 217-237 should be removed. Also the detailed description should be amended to clearly indicate which figures lie within the scope of the invention.

Non-metric units

8. As agreed in a telephone conversation with your agent, a single equivalent metric value for each of the repeating non-metric values mentioned throughout your specification may be included at the start of the detailed description rather than alongside each of the non-metric values.



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Page 2/2

[Examination Report contd.]

Registered Trade Marks

9. Although it should preferably be avoided, if you wish to keep the references to the Registered Trade Marks "Lubriplate and Teflon", you should acknowledge on pages 18 and 29 that they are Registered Trade Marks, possibly by using the abbreviation "(RTM)". If you do not insert an acknowledgment, I will do so in manuscript.

Publication

10. Publication of this application is proceeding concurrently.